

CENSUS OF POPULATION, 1936.

VOLUME VIII—IRISH LANGUAGE

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

The statistics of the population on 26th April, 1936, classified by Irish Language, contained in this publication, relate to the area which was formerly comprised in Saorstát Éireann and exclude particulars relating to the Counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone and the County Boroughs of Belfast and Londonderry. Under the Constitution of 1937 the name of the State is now Éire, or, in the English language, Ireland. The expression "Saorstát Éireann," is, however, being used in all the volumes of the Report of the 1936 Census of Population, as the Census was taken on a date prior to the coming into force of the Constitution Act, 1937.

The information in this volume was compiled from replies given in the following column of the Census Schedule :—

IRISH LANGUAGE.

- (1) Write "Irish only" opposite name of person who can speak only Irish.
 - (2) Write "Irish and English" opposite name of person who can speak Irish and English.
 - (3) For persons who can Read but cannot speak Irish, write "Read but cannot speak Irish."
 - (4) Do not write anything opposite names of persons who can neither read nor speak Irish.
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Personal judgment must necessarily enter so largely into the replies to this question that the number of "Irish speakers" would appear to be far less susceptible of exact measurement than any of the other matters into which it is the purpose of the Census to enquire. To other queries, (age, birthplace, religion, occupation, etc.) on the Census Schedule it is possible to give an exact reply. With regard to language it is extremely difficult to devise a method simple enough for Census purposes which would permit a rigid distinction being made between those who "know Irish" and those who do not. At the same time the statistics have a considerable value for purposes of comparison as between one part of the country and another, between this and previous Censuses, between one age group or occupation and another, etc.

The present volume shows several changes as compared with previous reports on the same subject. In previous Censuses particulars of knowledge of the Irish language have been published in respect of populations of all ages, for the 1936

sin le fáil i dtáiblí Mhóráirimh 1936 ach mar gheall ar *dhaoine bhí trí bliana d'aois agus os a chionn*. Tuigfear cén fáth nár cuireadh naoidheanáin agus daoine eile fé bhun trí bliana d'aois san áireamh nuair a bhí staitistíocht na teangan á cur le chéile, agus meastar gur fearr-de an staitistíocht iad d'fhágaint as. Táthar tar éis faisnéis ar an dul chéanna do chur ar fáil le haghaidh Mhóráirimh 1926, agus chífear o sna figiúirí i dTáible 1 go bhfuil an figiúir, ag taisbeáint cadé an méid féin gcéad de sna daoine uile is Gaedhilgeoirí, beagán níos mó de bharr gan daoine fé bhun trí bliana d'aois do chur san áireamh.

Is léir ón bhfuirm cheistiúcháin go rabhthas ar intinn i dtosach mion-eolas d'fhoillsiú i dtaobh na ndaoine ná labhrann ach Gaedhilg fé mar do rinneadh i 1926, *i.e.*, na daoine a bhí i ndon Gaedhilg a labhairt ach ná raibh i ndon Béarla ná aon teanga eile a labhairt. Isé méid daoine den chineál seo a háirmhíodh do bheith ann i 1936 ná 18,283. Ba mhó de chuid mhaith an uimhir sin ná an uimhir le haghaidh 1926, eadhon, 12,460, ach ní raibh cosúlacht na fírinne ar uimhir na bliana 1936 agus, má cuimhnítear ar áiteanna comhnaithe agus ar aoiseanna na ndaoine bhí i gceist, chífear nárbh fholáir no gurb é míniú an fhigiúra san ná mí-thuigsint mhór do bhaint le cad ba bhrí leis an gceist féin. Isé is dóichighe ná gur háirmhíodh mórán daoine i sceideal an Mhóráirimh amhail agus dá mba dhaoine le Gaedhilg amháin iad tóisc iad do labhairt Gaedhilge; ach ní féidir, ní nach iongna, a rá gurb é an méid atá áirmhithe le haghaidh na bliana 1936 uimhir iomlán na ndaoine gurb í an Ghaedhilg a ngnáth-theanga; ní fios, go deimhin, cad is líon don uimhir sin. Cinneadh dá bhrí sin gan aon colas d'fhoillsiú i dtaobh daoine do háirmhíodh amhlaidh agus líon na nGaedhilgeoirí, eadhon, na daoine uile thug "Gaedhilg amháin" mar fhreagra ar alt 1 no thug "Gaedhilg agus Béarla" mar fhreagra ar alt 2 den cheist i dtaobh na teangan a taisbeántar thuas, do luadh mar aon líon amháin. Daoine adubhairt go "léigh-eann ach ná labhrann" Gaedhilg do haicmíodh iad chun críche na dtáiblí mar Dhaoine gan Gaedhilg.

Measadh gur ghá, d'fhonn fearachas a dhéanamh o thaobh clódóircachta agus páipéir, mion-eolas áirithe den tsaghas a bhí san imleabhar i dtaobh na Gaedhilge don bhliain 1926 d'fhágaint ar lár in imleabhar 1936. Uime sin, do rinneadh na táiblí mion-eolais maidir le staid na teangan i ngach Ceanntar Iclainne agus i ngach Togh-Roinn Cheanntair fé leith, d'fhágaint ar lár sa tuarasgabháil chlóbhuailte agus, ina theanta sin, tá beagán ciorruithe déanta ar táiblí áirithe eile. An t-eolas do fágadh ar lár amhlaidh sa tuarasgabháil chlóbhuailte, tá sé le fáil i láimh-scribhinn in Oifig an Mhóráirimh agus is cead do dhaoine chuireann suin ann é léigheamh.

Tá mion-eolas tugtha san imleabhar so ar líon na ndaoine chomhnuíonn sa bhFíor-Ghaeltacht agus sa Bhreac-Ghaeltacht fé seach, agus fós ar an teangain a labhraid, ar a n-aoiseanna, ar a n-áruis chomhnuithe, ar an staid atá aca i gcúrsaí tionnscail, agus ar na tionnscail agus na slite beatha atá aca. Minítear i dTuarasgabháil Choimisiún na Gaeltachta, 1925, cad is achar don Fhíor-Ghaeltacht agus don Bhreac-Ghaeltacht.

Census the tables show language statistics only in respect of *persons aged three years and over*. The reasons for the exclusion of infants and others under three years of age in the compilation of language statistics will be appreciated and it is considered that this procedure effects an improvement in the statistics. Comparative figures for the 1926 Census have been compiled on this basis and it will be seen from the particulars in Table 1 that the exclusion of persons under three years of age tends to raise slightly the figure representing Irish speakers as a percentage of the total.

The form of questionnaire shows that it had been originally intended to publish particulars of those able to speak only Irish as was done in 1926, *i.e.*, of the number who, while able to speak Irish, were unable to speak English or any other language. The number returned in 1936 in this category, namely, 18,283, showed a considerable advance compared with 1926 when the number was 12,460, a result which lacked verisimilitude and which, having regard to the places of residence and the ages of the persons concerned, could only have been due to a considerable degree of misinterpretation of the question. Probably many persons were so described on the Census schedule because they used Irish in their everyday speech; and yet the aggregate as returned for 1936 cannot, of course, be regarded as the total number of persons who habitually speak Irish; the total, in fact, is quite indefinite. It was accordingly decided to suppress all particulars of persons so returned and to show one figure for Irish speakers which included those giving affirmative answers to sections 1 and 2 of the language question shown above. Persons describing themselves as able to "read but cannot speak Irish" were classed as non-Irish Speakers for the purpose of the tables.

For reasons of economy in printing and paper costs it was deemed necessary to omit from the 1936 volume certain detailed information on the same lines as that which had been included in the corresponding volume for 1926. The tables giving particulars of language in respect of each Dispensary District and each District Electoral Division have been omitted from the printed report and certain other tables were slightly condensed. The information thus excluded from the printed report is available in manuscript form at the Census Office and may be inspected by those interested.

Detailed statistics are given in this volume of the numbers, language spoken, ages, housing, industrial status, industries and the occupations of persons residing in the Fíor-Ghaeltacht and Breac-Ghaeltacht respectively. These areas are as defined in the Report of the Gaeltacht Commission, 1925.